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ALEXIS DELAMARE

Université de Rouen-Normandie/Universität Heidelberg

[alexis.delamare5@univ-rouen.fr](mailto:alexis.delamare5@univ-rouen.fr)

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# ARE EMOTIONS VALUECEPTIONS OR RESPONSES TO VALUES? HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF AFFECTIVITY RECONSIDERED

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## *abstract*

*How are we able to experience values? Two sides are competing in contemporary literature: 'Meinongians' (represented notably by Christine Tappolet) claim that axiological properties are apprehended in emotions, while 'Hildebrandians' (represented in particular by Ingrid Vendrell Ferran) assert that such experiences of value (or valueceptions) are accomplished in special 'value feelings', and that emotions are only responses to these felt values. In this paper, I study the Husserlian viewpoint on this issue. I reveal that, contrary to what almost all scholars have assumed so far, Husserl's position is not reducible to Meinong's and must on the contrary be regarded as an innovative and stimulating approach that helps unifying the two standard frameworks. It indeed recognizes (with Hildebrandians) the existence of non-emotional value feelings, while maintaining (with Meinongians) that originary axiological experiences are necessarily emotional.*

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## *keywords*

*Husserl; phenomenology; axiology; emotion; feeling.*

**Introduction.**  
**Emotion or**  
**feeling: how do we**  
**experience values?**

Our life world is from the outset *saturated with values*. Husserl himself – far from the image of an ‘intellectualist’ with which he has long been associated – acknowledges this primordality of values as soon as *Ideas I*:

This world is there for me not only as a world of mere things, but also with the same immediacy as a world of *objects with values, a world of goods, a practical world* (1983, p. 53).

Hence, values *originarily* inhabit the world, just like spatiotemporal things or natural facts. They are not mere ideal entities like Equality (De Monticelli, 2020, p. 43; Jardine, 2020, p. 56; Vendrell Ferran, 2022, p. 72), but they immediately *pertain* to the various objects that we encounter in the world: *the landscape itself* is sublime, *the murder itself* is abject. In this perspective, these values, as axiological predicates, are *moments of the things themselves*, just like their mass or their color (Tappolet, 2000, p. 6).

The present work assumes such an axiological ‘naïve realism’. To that extent, it will leave aside ontological questions and will focus exclusively on the ‘epistemology’ of values.

The latter issue is by no means less daunting than the former. While it is clear that our *perceptions* manifest to us the various sensible qualities of the world, and that it is through our conceptual *thought* that ideal objects such as numbers or species are revealed to our mind, the kind of ‘lived experience’ capable of *unveiling axiological determinations* remains quite delicate to identify. One could first consider accounting for such experiences of values (‘valueceptions’) in terms of *desire* (Oddie, 2005, p. 28; von Ehrenfels, 1897, pp. 2, 51-52) or *judgment* (Nussbaum, 2004; Solomon, 1976). Yet, many objections have been raised against these views (Vendrell Ferran, 2022, pp. 74-78).<sup>1</sup> For example, it has been argued that desires, contrary to valueceptions, have a world-to-mind direction of fit (Engelsen, 2018, p. 238).<sup>2</sup> As for judgments, they are higher-order cognitive states underpinned by propositional structures, while we are immediately “struck” by values (Mulligan, 2009).<sup>3</sup> In what follows, I assume that

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1 It must be noted that the classical criticisms raised in this context focus mainly on the idea that *emotions* are desires (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, pp. 28-39) or judgment (Deigh, 1994, p. 836). These claims are different from the ones asserting that *experiences of values* are conative or judicative acts.

2 See (Husserl, 2020b, p. 229; Meinong, 2020, p. 85; Mulligan, 2009, p. 144, 2010, p. 484) for other objections.

3 A related argument is that young infants can grasp values (for instance the – positive – value of their parents) but are not endowed with propositional aptitudes.

these objections are compelling and I focus on the two remaining options addressed in recent philosophy.

To begin with, many authors have regarded *emotion* as the kind of acts responsible for valueceptions. Three sorts of arguments can be put forward in favor of this claim:

1. The *linguistic* argument: many axiological concepts are directly linked to our emotional experiences (amusing/amusement, admirable/admiration) (Tappolet, 2000, p. 16).
2. The *phenomenological* argument: emotions enable us to gain access to what is *meaningful* for us. My concern for my cat is for instance materialized both in my current *love* for it and in the *sadness* that I would feel if it were to die. Conversely, as Thomas Fuchs aptly points out, without emotions, the world would be deprived of any significance (*Bedeutsamkeit*) (2014, p. 18).
3. The *psychopathological* argument: people suffering from antisocial personality disorder (*psychopaths*) show a strong *emotional deficit*, above all in guilt, remorse, and empathy (Prinz, 2008, p. 45). At the same time, there is evidence that they lack a proper comprehension of morality, since they do not understand the distinction between moral and conventional rules (Blair, 1995, p. 17). Rephrased in axiological terms: an *emotional impairment* leads to *the incapacity to grasp* (at least moral) *values*.

These three observations culminate in the ‘Meinongian’ (1917)<sup>4</sup> view on valueception: *values are presented in emotions* (Tappolet, 2000, pp. 8-9).

However, this thesis faces important challenges. In particular, it has been argued that, as ordinary language shows, emotions are not themselves *discoveries of values* but are *caused* by axiological apprehensions. As Kevin Mulligan puts it:

We can always ask someone why he feels the way he does. We do not ask someone why he knows that p or perceives something. We ask him how he knows that p. If some emotion of Sam were a disclosure of value, we ought not to be able to ask him why he feels the way he does (Mulligan, 2010, p. 485).

This objection, among others (Vendrell Ferran, 2022, pp. 75-76), has led an increasing number of scholars – such as John J. Drummond, Jean Moritz Müller or Søren Engelsen – to embrace an alternative, ‘Hildebrandian’<sup>5</sup> view on valueception, which has been very recently systematized by Ingrid Vendrell-Ferran (2022). This conception can be divided into two related claims:

1. There exists a type of lived experiences, called ‘*Fühlen*’, ‘*Wertfühlen*’, or ‘value feeling’, which is in principle *independent* from emotions, in the sense that it is not reducible to them, nor even founded on them: a value feeling can be *cold*, that is, may be experienced in the total absence of emotions (Drummond, 2009, p. 366; Engelsen, 2018, p. 240; Mulligan, 2009, p. 144, 2010, p. 486).
2. In this framework, emotions are conceived, not as direct experiences of values, but as *responses* to the values apprehended by a ‘value feeling’ (Engelsen, 2018, p. 245; Müller, 2019, p. 63; Mulligan, 2009, p. 151, 2010, p. 485).

Just to cite one of Vendrell Ferran’s examples: “feeling the bravery of an action calls us to respond with the emotions of admiration and respect” (2022, p. 83).

Yet, in turn, this ‘Hildebrandian’ view on valueception stands open to criticism. First, the

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4 Meinong indeed defended that emotions (*Gefühle, Emotionen*) were genuine “presentations” of what he called “dignitatives” (Meinong, 2020, pp. 28-29, 121). In recent times, it has been taken up famously by Tappolet (2000, p. 9), but also in (Milona, 2016; Roeser, 2011, p. 138; Zagzebski, 2003, p. 104).

5 This position was indeed initially defended by Dietrich von Hildebrand (von Hildebrand, 1916, pp. 163, 212), but also, at the same period, by Scheler (1973, pp. 173, 258) and Reinach (Reinach 1989, p. 296) among others (Salice, 2020).

demarcation between emotions and feelings is not made sufficiently clear. John J. Drummond<sup>6</sup>, for instance, writes that emotion “intends in a *more determinate* way the affective aspect” than does feeling (2009, p. 368, emphasis mine). The obscurity of such formulations casts doubts, more generally, on the exact *nature* of this alleged ‘feeling’. In the end, we cannot but have the impression that it is a category of acts merely *invented to satisfy theoretical needs* (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, p. 94; Mitchell, 2019, p. 786; Yaegashi, 2019, p. 76).

As a result, none of these two main viewpoints on valueception can be regarded as fully convincing. The purpose of the present paper is to shed new light on this puzzle, through the study of one particular approach to the problem at play, namely *Husserl’s*. This could seem a strange choice, for Husserl is usually considered to be a classical advocate of the ‘Meinongian’ standpoint on valueception. Yet, as the manuscripts collected in the recently published *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins* reveal (especially their second volume (Husserl, 2020b), thereafter abridged and cited as ‘*Studien II*’), this traditional exegesis is *partial*. The purpose of the present work is precisely to demonstrate that Husserl, far from being a basic ‘emotionalist’, develops an original, stimulating account of valueception that *unifies* the two sides at stake.

The paper is divided into three parts. In the first part, I present the reasons that motivated Husserl to embrace the ‘emotional’ view in his most famous texts. Yet, this emotional stance faces very serious objections, in particular the phenomenon of *axiological coldness* – the possibility of experiencing a value without being moved – of which *Husserl himself was well aware*. This issue prompted him to build up, as I show in the second part, a much more sophisticated conception of valueception which took into account the most fundamental features of the ‘value feeling’ standpoint. Finally, in the third part, I establish that there is *no contradiction* between Husserl’s major publications and the *Studien II*: even if the existence of non-emotional value feelings is acknowledged in these manuscripts, emotion remains the *originary* axiological experience.

**1. Mainstream  
Husserl:  
valueceptions  
are nothing but  
emotions**

In the last three decades, the stereotype of an ‘intellectualist’ Husserl has been aptly reassessed. Among other texts (Husserl 2001, pp. 277-283, 2004b, pp. 159-189, 2013, pp. 187-191), the publication of his lectures on ethics (1988, 2004a) has proven that he was also deeply concerned with the affective and practical dimensions of human experience. More importantly, these lectures have revealed that emotional phenomenology was *at the core of his transcendental project*. To make a long story short, Husserl understood transcendental phenomenology as a discipline that must take charge of “all true knowledge” and solve “all problems of reason” (1962, p. 299). In this framework, reason is no longer equated with *Verstand*, that is, with *theoretical reason*, but integrates its *axiological* and *practical* spheres as well. Yet, to establish the rationality of values, it is not sufficient to show that they comply with ‘formal axiological’ laws analogous to those of pure logic (Husserl, 1988, p. 48). This ontological approach must be completed by an ‘epistemological’ one, in which the phenomenologist reveals how values can be *experienced – and even known – by the subject* (Husserl, 1988, p. 250). In this transcendental perspective, *emotions (Gefühle)* play an *indispensable role*: only emotions can manifest something as *beautiful, noble, or disgusting*. This line of thought is systematized in the ‘mainstream’ interpretation of Husserl. According to this exegesis, Husserl’s philosophy of feelings is characterized by a significant evolution (Gyemant, 2018) that occurred approximately around his so-called ‘transcendental turn’. In the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl still endorsed a “non-objectifying” conception of *Gefühl*: *Gefühle* are intentional but do not contribute to the constitution of new objectual predicates.

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<sup>6</sup> For another (problematic) attempt of distinction, see (Engelsen, 2018, p. 240).

In Husserlian terms, emotions pertain to the *quality* of acts, but not to their *matter*, which is integrally provided by their cognitive basis. Yet, the constitution of *values* remained, in this framework, unintelligible. As a consequence, Husserl amended his theory and acknowledged in *Ideas I* “that any acts whatever — even emotional and volitional acts — are “objectifying,” “constituting” objects originaliter” (1983, p. 282, transl. modified).

In this context, emotion must be understood as a *complex act*, which is necessarily founded on an intellectual basis (Husserl, 1913, p. 389).<sup>7</sup> Hence, the whole correlate of this act is itself a complex one: it is underpinned by a ‘simple thing’ (*bloße Sache*) (e.g., the dog, the proof) which serves as a substrate for a *new, founded layer* (*Schicht*), that is precisely the value (the *dangerous* dog, the *elegant* proof).

As a consequence, axiological predicates cannot be given but as such *affective correlates*: “valueception” (*Wertnehmung*)<sup>8</sup> and “actual delight” (*aktueller Genuss*) are two equivalent expressions (Husserl, 2004a, p. 75). In other terms: our epistemological access to values is *exclusively* provided by our emotional acts. The pervasiveness of this claim throughout Husserl’s most well-known texts, in particular in his 1908 (1988, pp. 277, 323) or 1920 (2004a, p. 75) lectures on ethics, as well as in *Ideas II* (1952, p. 9, 1989, p. 11) or *Erste Philosophie* (2019, p. 49), has thus persuaded most Husserl’s scholars – belonging to both sides of the controversy<sup>9</sup> – to classify him, alongside with Meinong, as an ‘emotionalist’ on valueception.

This ‘emotional’ view, however, faces *one very substantial objection*, depicted by Husserl’s own students, namely the possibility of being aware of a certain value *without experiencing any emotion*. As von Hildebrand mentions as early as 1916, I can “take note” (*Kenntnis nehmen*) of the value of a certain state of affairs (e.g., that my friend is coming) without responding to it emotionally, that is, without rejoicing about it (1916, p. 167). Max Scheler, in his *Formalismus*, also suggests similar examples. It is quite possible, for instance, that I say: “True, this work of art is valuable, but I do not take any delight in looking at it; I do not like it” (1973, p. 250). The existence of this phenomenon – that I will sum up by the expression of *axiological coldness* – seems to ruin the standard ‘emotional’ view<sup>10</sup> that Husserl endorses in his most famous texts. If a valueception (*Wertnehmung*) can occur in a “cold” (*kalt*) (Scheler 1916, 257, 1973, 250) state, then it is plain that emotional acts cannot account for our experience of values<sup>11</sup>.

Very interestingly, the manuscripts gathered in the *Studien II*<sup>12</sup> reveal that *Husserl himself* was actually aware of this phenomenon as early as 1909, hence well before his students’ publications:<sup>13</sup> “I can find something enjoyable [*erfreulich*] without really enjoying it” (*Studien II*, p. 183). Another manuscript, from 1911, takes up and deepens this possibility:

## 2. Underground Husserl: emotion as “devotion” (*Hingabe*) to the value

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7 This thesis, as is well known, originates in Brentano’s *Vorstellungsgrundlage* (Brentano, 1973, p. 112).

8 Husserl appealed to this terminology as early as 1902 (von Hildebrand, 1916, p. 205).

9 On the ‘emotionalist’ side, see (Tappolet, 2000, p. 7; Yaegashi, 2019, p. 73). On the ‘Hildebrandian’ side, see (Müller, 2019, p. 54, 2020, p. 116; Mulligan, 2010, p. 483).

10 Naturally, contemporary partisans of ‘value feeling’ theories (but also other scholars) have taken up this crucial issue to criticize the ‘emotional’ standpoint (Deonna & Teroni, 2012, p. 55; Drummond, 2009, p. 369; Engelsen, 2018, p. 244; Helm, 2001, p. 38; Müller, 2019, p. 99; Mulligan, 2010, p. 487; Vendrell Ferran, 2022, p. 75).

11 James Jardine rightly notes, while commenting the *Studien II*, that “we sometimes experience an object as agreeable without finding ourselves passionately moved by it” (Jardine, 2020, p. 61). Yet, I would *radicalize* such formulation: we can apprehend a value without finding ourselves moved by it *at all*.

12 See (Husserl, 2020a, pp. LVI-LXI) for editorial details on these texts.

13 Since von Hildebrand arrived in Göttingen the same year (Salice, 2020), it is natural to raise the question of the influence he may have exerted on Husserl (and reciprocally) (Andras Varga, 2018; Husserl, 1994, p. 125). On this issue, see in particular the notes taken by Husserl on his exemplar of (Hildebrand 1916), reported in (Schuhmann 1992). Besides Scheler, another important character on these questions is Geiger (Geiger, 1911; Vendrell Ferran, 2008, p. 205).

I see a beautiful female figure. Once I am delighted, the other time she leaves me cold, although I find her equally beautiful. The same good food, depending on whether I am full or hungry, delights me or leaves me cold. I missed it, and I appreciate it as being equally ‘valuable’, as equally good. The feeling as a grasping of value [*Das Fühlen*<sup>14</sup> als *Werterfassen*] is to be distinguished from the delight [*Genießen*], from the higher affective reaction (*Studien* II, p. 102).

These passages are not isolated: rather, axiological coldness is unceasingly evoked, like a leitmotiv, throughout the *Studien* II.<sup>15</sup> As a result, both the most important argument (axiological coldness) and the most important distinction (initial *Fühlen* vs reactional *Gefühl*)<sup>16</sup> later used by ‘Hildebrandians’ were already known to Husserl. This led him to develop an enriched conception that contrasts with the ‘mainstream’ interpretation of his thought.<sup>17</sup> In this ‘underground’ view, emotions are no longer equated with immediate experiences of values. Rather, they are conceived as *episodes* that stem from an initial valueception but are not reduced to it. This is especially evidenced by what Husserl calls *Hingabe*.<sup>18</sup> Let’s consider the following text from the same 1911 manuscript:

Do not we find the distinction between devotion [*Hingabe*] and non-devotion [*Nicht-Hingabe*] in all affective acts? I value a beautiful woman, I value a good meal, I value a state of affairs [...]. Have we not everywhere the phenomenon [*Phänomen*] of the affective act, in which something ‘stands there’ as joyful, regretful (as wishful, as ought-to-be) etc. and, in contrast to this, the devotion, the more or less lively joy, sadness, wish, etc.? (*Studien* II, p. 109)

In this passage, Husserl accounts for the discrepancy between the initial valueception and the subsequent emotion in terms of “*Hingabe*”, whose best translation is probably the term “devotion”. Just like employees can be more or less devoted to their company, and just like the members of a church can be more or less devoted to their god, the subject can be more or less emotionally ‘devoted’ to the value she is apprehending. In such devotion, this value is no longer merely grasped in a “theoretical”<sup>19</sup> fashion, but it moves us, it troubles us, it overwhelms us. As Husserl poetically puts it, *Hingabe* can thus be defined as “Mit-dem-Herzen-dabei-Sein“, “being there with our heart” (*Studien* II, p. 116).

The introduction of this new concept allows Husserl to set forth a sophisticated description of emotional episodes, in which they are articulated as *four-stage* processes (cf. Figure n°1

14 It is worth noting the use of a ‘Schelerian’ vocabulary here.

15 To name just a few examples: I can see something good without feeling any joy (*Studien* II, p. 531); I can see something beautiful without getting excited (*Studien* II, p. 97); I can eat a *Strudel* without experiencing delight (*Studien* II, p. 171). Such coldness can in particular be provoked by special physical states – such as fatigue (*Studien* II, p. 169, 227) – or moods – depression (*Studien* II, p. 211).

16 This ‘reactional’ conception of emotions is expressed via a wide range of notions in the *Studien* II. The emotion is for instance said to be “motivated” (*motiviert*) (*Studien* II, p. 106), “founded” (*fundiert*) (*Studien* II, p. 177), “grounded” (*gegründet*) (*Studien* II, p. 140), or “excited” (*erregt*) (*Studien* II, p. 123) by the value, to find its “source” (*Quelle*) in it (*Studien* II, p. 171), to be a “reaction” (*Reaktion*) (*Studien* II, pp. 102, 118) or a “response” (*Antwort*) (*Studien* II, p. 205) to it, or to emerge “in virtue of” the axiological object (*um der Objektwerte willen*) (*Studien* II, p. 55).

17 In recent works, James Jardine has also aptly called into question the traditional interpretation of Husserl’s theory of emotions (Jardine, 2020, 2022, p. 49). In many respects, Jardine’s explorations can be seen as complementary to the position advocated in the present paper.

18 Husserl annotated a 1909 manuscript dedicated to the issue (*Studien* II, p. 183) with the commentary: “Nota bene! Sehr wichtig” (Husserl, 2020c, p. 191).

19 Husserl appeals explicitly to this paradoxical expression (*Studien* II, p. 185).

below).

**Stage 1.** There is first the *passive reception* (*Studien* II, p. 50) of a value, that “strikes” (Mulligan, 2009) the subject. The valenced object “stands there” (“*steht da*”), and the subject becomes aware of it in a glance that is similar to the perceptual grasp of worldly things:

Value-apperception, value-apprehension, valueception. A painting stands there as a beautiful painting. A violin stands there as a beautiful, precious [*wertvolle*] violin, a tone sounds noble (*Studien* II, p. 121).

**Stage 2.** Yet, this initial passive stance does not exhaust the whole emotional process (Jardine, 2022, p. 61) and must be first completed by an *active engagement vis-à-vis* the appearing value, in which, so to speak, the subject says ‘yes’ (but may also say ‘no’) to its manifestation.<sup>20</sup> This does not require adopting a highly reflective position in front of the valenced object. Even ‘indulging oneself’ – “*sich hingeben*” (*Studien* II, p. 109) – to something irritating and letting anger emerge is already a kind of *agentive behavior*, since, as Husserl highlights, I can also abstain (*Enthaltbarkeit*) (*Studien* II, p. 185) from participating in the negative value in virtue of an active “Gegentendenz” (*Studien* II, p. 116). Hence, the subject always embraces a minimal stance (positive – *Hingabe* – or negative – *Nicht-Hingabe*) towards the axiological content. Moreover, such active “affective stance” (*Gemütsstellungnahme*) (*Studien* II, p. 121)<sup>21</sup> typically involves two components: an *attentional* one (Jardine, 2022, p. 63) – the valenced object comes to the forefront of consciousness<sup>22</sup> – and an *enactive* one – the subject physically engages with the object, turns around it, comes closer to it, touches it or even hits it (*Studien* II, p. 100).

**Stage 3.** However, to experience an actual emotion, such active engagement is still insufficient: *my heart must be touched as well*. This is not a metaphor: any genuine *Gefühl* is always *embodied*<sup>23</sup> through a variety of *affective sensations* (*Gefühlsempfindungen*), like sensible pains or pleasures but also shivers (*Studien* II, pp. 102-103, 109, 111-113, 123, 172-173, 176, 404, 522). This is the *passive component* of *Hingabe* (*Studien* II, pp. 168-169, 204, 513), that Husserl depicts as a “delight” (*Genuss*) (*Studien* II, p. 186), “ravishment” (*Entzücken*) (*Studien* II, p. 140) or “enthusiasm” (*Begeisterung*) (*Studien* II, p. 121).

**Stage 4.** The emergence of bodily feelings is at the same time responsible for the *enduring* character of emotions. As a consequence, the way an emotion *ends* heavily relies on the behavior of the *Gefühlsempfindungen*.

1. It is first possible that the bodily feelings quickly vanish. In this case, the whole act, “sinks” (*Studien* II, pp. 153-154) into secondary passivity but, at the same time, “remains sedimented” (Husserl, 2001, p. 77). Such sedimentation in turn *influences* further valueceptions and emotions: one is prompted to valueate what has been previously associated with affective episodes (*Studien* II, p. 140).
2. Yet, the bodily feelings may also remain vivid for quite a long time, even though the

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20 In *Ideas* II, Husserl speaks explicitly of an “active devotion (*Hingegenheit*)” (Husserl, 1952, p. 9) to aesthetic values. As a consequence, the term “abandon” used in the English translation is inadequate (Husserl, 1989, pp. 10-11).

21 On *Stellungnahme*, see (Jardine, 2020, p. 60, 2022, p. 48). Again, I emphasize that I here use this concept in a *very broad sense*: to ‘take a position’ basically means to *react spontaneously to an appearing object*. In this sense, the *Stellungnahme* does not demand, as it is the case in other contexts (Jacobs, 2016, p. 267), to take a *critical* stance over one’s beliefs.

22 To depict this attentional dimension of the *Stellungnahme*, Husserl employs the term *Zuwendung* (active ‘conversion’ towards the object) rather than *Aufmerksamkeit* (mere attentiveness) (*Studien* II, p. 122).

23 In this respect, Husserl sides with William James, but also with contemporary proponents of ‘affective embodiment’ (Fuchs, 2014, 2022).

initial axiological motivation is no longer present. This is the basic condition for the development of a mood (*Stimmung*) (Fisette, 2021; *Studien* II, p. 173; Lee, 1998).

3. A third, active way to end emotional episodes is to perform a higher-order *objectification* of the value that appeared, in particular in the form of an explicit *axiological judgment*. This requires endorsing a new, *theoretical attitude* and to convert the value into an “actual doxic objectivity”, as Husserl puts it in *Ideas I* (1983, pp. 76-77, 290).<sup>24</sup>

The four-stage course of an emotional episode can be summarized in the following figure. In this figure, the passive steps are represented by rectangles, and the active ones by ellipses, while the ‘cold’ experiences are represented in white, and the ‘hot’ ones in black.

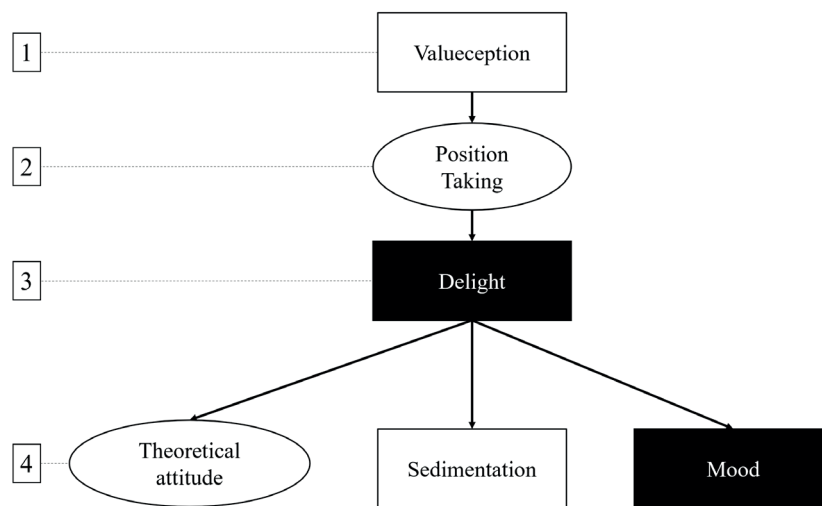


Figure n° 1: Husserl’s depiction of affective episodes as four-stage processes

**3. Husserl’s compromise: emotions as originary experiences of value**

It is now manifest that Husserl’s position on valueception is much more subtle than usually assumed. But is it not *too subtle*? Indeed, how is it possible to conciliate the ‘mainstream’ account defended in Husserl’s most famous texts with the ‘underground’ one favored in the *Studien* manuscripts? Supposing an evolution of Husserl’s ideas is vain, since the two points of view are alternatively endorsed at the same period<sup>25</sup>. In addition, even in the *Studien*, he sometimes comes back to the traditional ‘emotional’ perspective (*Studien* II, pp. 37, 240). Hence, Husserl did not seem to have deemed these two stances contradictory. In the last part of this paper, I will show how this apparent conflict can be resolved in his framework. The basic idea is to consider actual emotions as being *originary*, that is, *intuitive* experiences of values, while *cold valueceptions* remain mere *intentions*, that is, mere *empty* axiological apprehensions<sup>26</sup>. Consider the following passage from *Ideas II*:

<sup>24</sup> On this operation, see also the *Studien* II (*Studien* II, pp. 8, 20, 29, 91), the lectures on ethics (1988, p. 69), *Ideas* II (1952, pp. 14-15, 1989, pp. 16-17), *First Philosophy* (2019, p. 227) and *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929, p. 121).  
<sup>25</sup> As we saw, Husserl is ‘Meinongian’ in 1908 (lectures on ethics) and again in 1913 (*Ideas* I and II), while he defends a ‘Hildebrandian’ standpoint in 1909 and 1911 manuscripts.  
<sup>26</sup> In this perspective, Husserl’s stance can be fruitfully compared to that of Thomas Fuchs, who asserts that “the actual realization of the value consists in its being experienced or felt, and this cannot be replaced by its ‘knowing’” (2020, p. 33). In other terms, for Fuchs, as for Husserl, a cold grasp of value remains epistemologically *deficient*.

*Each consciousness which originally constitutes a value-Object as such, necessarily has in itself a component belonging to the sphere of feelings. The most originary [ursprünglichste] constitution of value is performed in feelings as that pre-theoretical (in a broad sense) delighting devotion [genießende Hingabe] [...]. Just as there is, however, a sort of representing from afar, an empty representational intending which is not a being in the presence of the object, so there is a feeling which relates to the object emptily; and as the former is fulfilled in intuitive representing, so is the empty feeling fulfilled by way of the delight (Genießen) (Husserl, 1952, pp. 9-10, 1989, p. 11, transl. modified).<sup>27</sup>*

This explains why the ‘emotional’ standpoint remains *fundamentally correct*: even though one can experience a value without being moved, it is only in a ‘hot’ delight or devotion that this value is *genuinely intuited*, is perceived as *being really there in person*. In this perspective, cold valueceptions rely *teleologically* on emotions: the empty axiological apprehension *strives for* its fulfillment in an actual delight or ravishment. As a result, cold value apperceptions remain *non-originary* despite their *temporal primacy* in the unfolding of an affective episode. This line of thought is pervasive throughout the *Studien*, where Husserl refers to this operation of fulfillment (*Erfüllung*) (*Studien* II, pp. 101, 450) through a manifold vocabulary. On the one hand, he characterizes it as an authentic *givenness* (*Gegenbenheit*) of the value at stake (*Studien* II, p. 24), which induces a *shift in the phenomenology* of the affective experience: the *Hingabe* leads to a “*lebendige*” (living) joy or sadness (*Studien* II, p. 109). On the other hand, this fulfillment enhances the *epistemological worth* of the feeling. In this perspective, it is said to constitute a “confirmation” (*Bestätigung*) (*Studien* II, pp. 28, 430), a “justification” (*Begründung*) (*Studien* II, p. 278), an “attestation” (*Ausweisung*) (*Studien* II, pp. 298, 397), or a “legitimization” (*Berechtigung*) (*Studien* II, p. 404) of the initial *Wertnehmung*. The upshot of this conciliation between the ‘mainstream’ and the ‘underground’ interpretations is that Husserl *escapes the traditional dichotomy* between ‘emotional’ and ‘value feeling’ theories. By contrast with the former, he acknowledges the existence of non-emotional experiences of value. At the same time, by contrast with the latter, he did not consider the *Fühlen* as the *originary axiological mode of givenness*. To that extent, Husserl explicitly contradicts Scheler (1973, p. 258) and Geiger (1913, 574), but also contemporary representatives of the ‘value feeling’ standpoint, in particular Vendrell Ferran (2022, pp. 74, 78, 80) and Mulligan (2009).

As a conclusion, I have tried and reassessed Husserl’s position within the ‘emotional’ vs ‘value feeling’ debate. I have demonstrated that the mainstream, ‘Meinongian’ interpretation, relying on his main works, is *incomplete*, as Husserl acknowledged, in the *Studien* II manuscripts, the possibility of non-emotional (‘cold’) valueceptions. Yet, such acknowledgment did not lead him to embrace a full-fledged ‘Hildebrandian’ view, since he maintained (with Meinongians) that our *originary* epistemological access to values is rooted in actual emotions. Hence, Husserl’s approach, contrary to what has been traditionally assumed, is *innovative*: it pertinently *picks out the most interesting features of both sides and unifies them into a consistent account*.

## Conclusion

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27 See also, for very close descriptions, the second volume of *First philosophy* (2019, p. 307).

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